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LU TING-YI

"LET FLOWERS OF MANY KINDS BLOSSOM, DIVERSE SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT CONTEND!"

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(A Speech on the Policy of the Communist Party of China on Art, Literature and Science Delivered on May 26, 1956)

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MR. Kuo Mo-jo, President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Chairman of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, has asked me to speak on the policy of the Chinese Communist Party on the work of artists, writers and scientists.

To artists and writers, we say, "Let flowers of many kinds blossom." To scientists we say, "Let diverse schools of thought contend." This is the policy of the Chinese Communist Party. It was announced by Chairman Mao Tse-tung at the Supreme State Conference.

In applying this policy we have gained some experience, but it is still far too scanty. Furthermore, what I am saying today is merely my own personal understanding of this policy. You here are scientists specializing in the natural and social sciences, doctors, writers and artists; some of you are members of the Communist Party, some friends from democratic parties, and others non-party friends. You will readily see how immensely important this policy is in the development of Chinese art, literature and scientific research — the work you yourselves are engaged in — so if you think I am mistaken on any point, please don't hesitate to correct me. Then we can all do our bit to promote the common cause.

I. Why This Policy, and Why This Emphasis on It Now?

If we want our country to be prosperous and strong, we must, besides consolidating the people's state power, developing our economy and education and strengthening our national defence, have a flourishing art, literature and science. That is essential.

If we want art, literature and science to flourish, we must apply a policy of letting flowers of many kinds blossom, letting diverse schools of thought contend.

Literature and art can never really flourish if only one flower blooms alone, no matter how beautiful that flower may be. Take the theatre, an example which readily comes to mind these days. Some years back there were still people who set their face against Peking opera. Then the Party decided to apply the policy summed up in the words "let flowers of many kinds blossom side by side, weed through the old to let the new emerge" to the theatre. Everybody can see now how right it was to do so, and the notable results it led to. Thanks to free competition and the fact that the various kinds of drama now all learn from one another, our theatre has made rapid progress.

In the field of science, we have historical experience to draw on. During the period of the Spring and Autumn Annals (722-481 B.C.) and of the Warring States (403-221 B.C.) more than two thousand years ago, many schools of thought vied with each other for supremacy. That was a golden age in the intellectual development of China. History shows that unless independent thinking and free discussion are encouraged, academic life stagnates. And conversely, when they are encouraged, academic growth speeds up. But, of course, the state of affairs existing in those ancient times was very different from what it is in present-day China. At that time, society was in turmoil. The various schools of thought did vie with each other, spreading their ideas; but they did so spontaneously, with no sort of conscious, organized leadership. Now the people have won a world of freedom for themselves. The people's democratic dictatorship has been set up and consolidated. There is a popular demand that nothing should be allowed to impede the onward march of science. That is why we consciously map out an all-embracing plan for scientific development and adopt a policy of letting diverse schools of thought contend to give vigour to academic growth.

One cannot fail to see that in class societies art, literature and science are, in the last analysis, weapons in the class struggle.

This is quite clear in the case of art and literature. Here we can see things that are obviously pernicious. The stuff written by Hu Feng is one such example. Pornographic and gutter literature that debauches people and turns them into gangsters is another. Still another example is the so-called literature summed up in phrases like "let's play mah-jong and to hell with state affairs," "the moon in America is rounder than the moon in China," etc. It is perfectly right and proper for us to look on literature of this pernicious kind as on a par with flies, mosquitoes, rats and sparrows and rid ourselves of it all.[1] This can only

benefit, not harm our literature. Thus we say there is art and literature, for instance, that serves the workers, peasants and soldiers, and art and literature that serves the imperialists, landlords and bourgeoisie. What we need is art and literature that serves the workers, peasants and soldiers — art and literature that serves the people.

The existence of class struggle is also fairly clear in philosophy and the social sciences. Hu Shih's views on philosophy, history, education and politics have been held up to public odium.[2] The repudiation of his views is a reflection of class struggle in the field of the social sciences. We are perfectly justified in denouncing them. We are also justified in denouncing Mr. Liang Sou-ming's ideas.[3] We are also right in criticizing other philosophical schools of bourgeois idealism and bourgeois sociology.

Now let us see how things stand in the field of natural science. Every scientist has his own political viewpoint, although natural science itself has no class character. Formerly some who specialized in the natural sciences blindly worshipped the United States, while others tended to be "non-political." It is right and proper to criticize all such things as undesirable — and such criticism is a reflection of class struggle.

We cannot fail to notice too that although art, literature and scientific research have a close bearing on the class struggle, they are not, after all, the same thing as politics. Political struggle is a direct form of class struggle. Art, literature and the social sciences give expression to the class struggle sometimes in a direct, and sometimes in a roundabout way. It is

a one-sided, rightist way of looking at things to assume that art, literature and science have nothing to do with politics and that "art for art's sake," or "science for science's sake" is a justified standpoint. To look at things in that way is certainly wrong. On the other hand, it is one-sided and "leftist" to oversimplify things and equate art, literature and science with politics. This view is equally wrong.

"Letting flowers of many kinds blossom, diverse schools of thought contend" means that we stand for freedom of independent thinking, of debate, of creative work; freedom to criticize and freedom to express, maintain and reserve one's opinions on questions of art, literature or scientific research.*

The freedom we uphold is not the same as that based on the type of democracy advocated by the bourgeoisie. The freedom advocated by the bourgeoisie really means freedom for only a minority, with little or no freedom for the working people. The bourgeoisie exercises a dictatorship over the working people. Jingos in the United States bellow about the "free world"—a free world in which jingos and reactionaries have all the freedom and every freedom, while the Rosenbergs are put to death because they stand for peace. We, on the contrary, hold that there must be democratic liberties among the people, but that no freedom should be extended to counter-revolutionaries: for them we have only dictatorship. This is a question of drawing a political demarcation line.

* See Appendix A.

A clear political line must be drawn between friend and foe.

"Let flowers of many kinds blossom, diverse schools of thought contend": that means freedom among the people. And we urge that, as the people's political power becomes progressively consolidated, such freedom should be given ever fuller scope.

Among the people there are points of agreement and points of difference. Our country has a constitution and it is a public duty to abide by it — this is an agreement among the people. That is to say, the people agree among themselves that they should love their country and support socialism. But there are other matters on which they do not agree with one another. In ideology there is the difference between materialism and idealism. This difference in outlook exists not only while there are classes — it will go on existing even when there are no classes, when we live in a communist society. While classes exist, the contradiction between materialism and idealism takes the form of contradiction between classes. After the disappearance of classes, as long as there are contradictions between the subjective and the objective, between the progressive and the backward, between the forces of production and production relations in society, contradiction between materialism and idealism will go on existing, even in socialist and communist societies. The struggle between materialism and idealism will be a protracted one.

Members of the Communist Party are dialectical materialists. We Communists of course stand for materialism and against idealism — nothing can change

that. But, precisely because we are dialectical materialists and understand the laws governing the development of society, we hold that a strict distinction must be made between the battle of ideas among the people and the struggle against counter-revolutionaries. Among the people themselves there is freedom not only to spread materialism but also to propagate idealism. Provided he is not a counter-revolutionary, everyone is free to expound materialism or idealism. There is also freedom of debate between the two. This is a struggle between conflicting ideas among the people, but that is quite different from the struggle against counter-revolutionaries. We must suppress and put an end to the activities of counter-revolutionaries. We also have to wage a struggle against backward, idealist ways of thinking among the people. The latter struggle can be quite sharp, too; but we embark on it with the intention of strengthening unity, ending backwardness and creating an ever closer unity among the people. When it comes to questions of ideas, administrative measures will get us nowhere. Only through open debate can materialism gradually conquer idealism.*

There will be diverse opinions, too, on matters of a purely artistic, academic or technological nature. This is, of course, quite all right. In matters of this sort, there is freedom to voice different opinions, to criticize, counter-criticize and debate.

In short, we hold that while it is necessary to draw a clear political line between friend and foe, we must

* See Appendix B.

have freedom among the people. To "let flowers of many kinds blossom, diverse schools of thought contend" is the expression of that freedom among the people in art, literature and science.

Conditions are ripe for this policy. So let us see how things stand now.

First of all, in key parts of the country we have won a decisive victory in every aspect of the work of socialist transformation. In these areas in the next few years the system of exploitation of man by man will be ended. All the former exploiters will be transformed into working people living by their own honest toil. Our country will become a socialist state without exploiting classes.

Secondly, the political outlook of Chinese intellectuals has undergone a fundamental change, and a still more fundamental change is taking place. Comrade Chou En-lai dwelt on this at some length in his "Report on the Question of Intellectuals." In this connection let us briefly review the latest struggle we have been engaged in.

This is an ideological struggle against bourgeois idealism; and it must be said that in the course of it most intellectuals have given a very good account of themselves and made remarkable progress.

In this struggle academic circles concentrated their main fire on Hu Shih and Hu Feng, two counter-revolutionaries. These men are not simply idealist in their outlook. They are politically counter-revolutionary. We also criticized the philosophical, socio-political views of Mr. Liang Sou-ming and bourgeois individualist ideas in artistic and literary circles. As

everybody can see now, it was right to wage this struggle because it was necessary in advancing the cause of socialist transformation.

During this struggle the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party pointed out that we needed to strive resolutely against all ideas that hampered academic criticism and discussion. Such harmful ideas expressed themselves in many different ways. There was idolatry of the "leading lights" of the bourgeoisie, who were held up as "authorities" immune from criticism. There was an overbearing, supercilious attitude characteristic of the bourgeoisie towards young Marxists, who were kept in the background. Some Party members, setting themselves up as "authorities," were intolerant of criticism and never went in for self-criticism. Other Party members, afraid of "wrecking the united front," or "doing harm to unity," dared not criticize others. Still others, for reasons of personal friendship or for "face-saving" reasons, failed to criticize others' mistakes, and even covered them up.

The Central Committee of the Party has made it clear that in academic criticism and discussion the principle that should be observed is that no one should have any special privileges. It is wrong to set oneself up as an "authority" and suppress criticism, or turn a blind eye to wrong, bourgeois ideas, to let things drift or even capitulate to such wrong ideas.

The Central Committee also pointed out that academic criticism and discussion ought to be based on persuasion, reasoning and honest consideration of the facts. That is to say, we should encourage earnest

discussion, but discussion on a scientific basis. Criticism and discussion should be the result of careful study; there is no place for crude oversimplification or high-handed proceedings. We should proceed by free discussion, not have recourse to administrative measures. Anyone criticized should be allowed to answer back, and such counter-criticism should not be muzzled. A minority who hold a different opinion should be allowed to keep it: this is not a case where the principle of the minority obeying the majority applies. Those who make mistakes over questions of scholarship and are still loath, even after criticism and discussion, to publish articles to correct their views, need not be asked to do so. In the academic world, even when a conclusion on any given question has been reached, discussion is still permissible if fresh differences of opinion arise.

The Central Committee also said that while we are criticizing wrong, bourgeois ideas and conducting criticism and discussion on questions of scholarship, we must stick to the policies mapped out by the Party — the policy of maintaining the united front and the policy of uniting and remoulding intellectuals. We must make a distinction between people who stick to wrong, bourgeois ideas and those who, while holding such wrong ideas, lean towards materialism, and we should approach them in different ways. A clear distinction must be made between those who are counter-revolutionaries politically and those who merely make mistakes in the academic field. Scholars who hold seriously mistaken, bourgeois ideas in the academic field should still be given suitable jobs as long as they

are not engaged in counter-revolutionary activity. It is our job to see that they can go on doing research work for the benefit of society. We should respect any special knowledge they have which is beneficial to society, see to it that it is made full use of and passed on to our young people. We should also encourage them to take an active part in academic criticism and discussion so that they can remould themselves in the process.

All these instructions helped us combat bourgeois idealism and conduct criticism in academic circles without going too far wrong. Now, as we look back on our past activity, we find that we did, in the main, do the right thing in the course of this struggle, and made no bad mistakes either way. But some defects and mistakes there still were — in the way Mr. Yu Ping-po was criticized for instance.[4] In the matter of politics, Mr. Yu is blameless. The mistakes he committed were only in the field of literature, and it was necessary for us to criticize him from an academic and ideological point of view. Many articles on Mr. Yu did that and did it very well. But some were not so well written; they were not very persuasive and were couched in too virulent a tone. As to the allegation that Mr. Yu "monopolized the use of rare, ancient Chinese books," that was without foundation. I feel I ought to clear up this point.

So far we have been talking about the past. Now let us see how things are at present.

The situation now is vastly different. If a year or two back bourgeois idealism still had wide currency, if the Hu Fengs did not hesitate to launch furious attacks

on the ideological front, if many intellectuals could not tell idealism from materialism or understand the harm idealism could do to the cause of socialism, now tremendous progress has been made in intellectual circles.

In some organizations the campaign against the reactionary ideas of Hu Feng and Hu Shih has not been carried to a proper conclusion; and the work of ferreting out hidden counter-revolutionaries has not been completed. In all such organizations we should carry on, not stopping half way, because only by carrying through the campaign can we create conditions favourable to the many things that need to be done in the future. It should be emphasized over and over again that well over 90 per cent of the people in these organizations are ordinary, decent people (including those who are a bit backward), who should be brought into the common struggle against counter-revolutionaries.

Thirdly, we still have enemies, and the class struggle is still going on inside the country. But our enemies, and our enemies inside the country in particular, have had their teeth drawn.

Who are these enemies? Abroad, we face aggressive imperialist forces with the jingos of the United States at their head; at home, we face the Chiang Kai-shek clique entrenched on Taiwan and some other stray left-overs of the counter-revolution. These are our enemies. We must keep up a relentless struggle against them; we must not relax our efforts.

Fourthly, the political and ideological unity of the people has been greatly strengthened and is growing stronger day by day.

It is because of all this that the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party is now emphasizing the policy of letting flowers of many kinds blossom, diverse schools of thought contend. By this policy we shall bring into full play all that is good and useful in society in order to give better service to the people, and pool our efforts to create a flourishing art and literature and put our scientific work on a level with the best in the world.

Under the guidance of the government, many scientists are engaged in drawing up a twelve-year plan of work in the natural sciences. Twelve-year plans for philosophy and the social sciences are also being worked out. The making and realization of such plans is a magnificent task for our scientists. The implementation of the policy of letting diverse schools of thought contend is an important guarantee of success of this task.

II. Strengthen Unity

Let flowers of many kinds blossom, diverse schools of thought contend: that is a policy to mobilize all the positive elements. It is also, therefore, a policy that will in the end strengthen unity.

On what basis are we to unite? On the basis of patriotism and socialism.

What do we unite for? To build a new, socialist China and combat our enemies both at home and abroad.

There are two kinds of unity: one is built on mechanical obedience and the other on our own conscious, free will. What we want is the latter.

Are those engaged in art, literature and science united? Yes, they are. Compare the situation in the days when the Chinese People's Republic was just founded with what we have now and you find we now have a far closer unity among artists, writers and scientists. This has come about as a result of our work for social reforms and changes in our ways of thought. It would be wrong to deny or ignore this. But even so, we cannot say that our unity is all it should be: there is still room for improvement.

In what respect? Well, first and foremost, some Communist Party members have forgotten Comrade Mao Tse-tung's warning about the evils of sectarianism. Success turns some people's heads and they get swelled-headed and sectarian.

In his "Rectify the Party's Style of Work" — a speech he made in 1942 — Comrade Mao Tse-tung had this to say:

"Many of our comrades are much given to swaggering before non-Party people, despising and belittling them, and are unwilling to show them respect or appreciate their good qualities. This is precisely a sectarian tendency. Having read a few Marxist books, these comrades become arrogant rather than modest and habitually dismiss others as no good without knowing that they themselves are really tyros and

smatterers. Our comrades must realize the truth that the Party members are always a minority as compared with non-Party people. Suppose there were one Communist in a hundred Chinese, then among China's population of 450,000,000 there would be 4,500,000 Communists. Yet, even if our membership reached such a colossal figure, the Communists would still form only one per cent of the whole population, while 99 per cent of our countrymen would remain outside the Party. On what grounds, then, can we refuse to co-operate with non-Party people? As to all those who are willing to, or in all probability can, co-operate with us, we have not only the duty to co-operate with them but absolutely no right to exclude them. But, failing to realize this, some of our Party members despise or even exclude those who are willing to co-operate with us. There are no grounds whatsoever for doing so. Have Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin given us any grounds for that? No. On the contrary, they have always earnestly urged us to link ourselves closely with the masses and not isolate ourselves from them. Has the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party given us any grounds? No. There is not a single one among all its decisions that says that we can isolate ourselves from the masses and stand alone. On the contrary, the Central Committee has always told us to link ourselves closely with the masses and not to isolate ourselves from them. Thus any practice that isolates us from the masses has no sanction at all, and it is simply a mischief done by the sectarian ideas of some comrades' own invention. As the error of sectarianism is still very serious in a

section of our Party members and hinders the implementation of the Party line, we should start a great educational campaign within the Party to deal with it. First of all, we should make our cadres thoroughly understand how serious the problem is and how utterly impossible it is to overthrow our enemy and attain the goal of revolution unless the Communists are united with non-Party cadres and people." (*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, English edition, Vol. IV, pp. 42-43. Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1956.)

As everyone knows, in the past few years we have fought a series of battles in the Party against sectarianism in artistic, literary and scientific circles. We have waged this struggle in organizations dealing with public health and research in the natural sciences, in literature and art, and in the social sciences. We shall go on waging this struggle and we call on all Party members working in these fields to make an end of this sectarianism.

In the course of these struggles we have gained some experience, and I should like to say something about this.

(1) As everyone knows, the natural sciences, including medicine, have no class character. They have their own laws of development. The only way they tie up with social institutions is that under a bad social system they make rather slow progress, and under a better one they progress fairly rapidly. The theoretical side of this question was settled long ago. It is, therefore, wrong to label a particular theory in medicine, biology or any other branch of natural science "feudal," "capitalist," "socialist," "proletarian"

or "bourgeois." It is wrong, for instance, to say that "traditional Chinese doctors are feudal doctors," that "doctors of the Western school are capitalist doctors," that "Pavlov's theory is socialist" or "Michurin's theory is socialist," or that "Mendel's and Morgan's principles of heredity are capitalist" and so on. We must not believe such stuff. Some people make this sort of mistake because they are sectarian. Others do it unconsciously by trying to emphasize, but not in the proper way, that one ought to learn from the latest scientific achievements in the Soviet Union. These mistakes stem from different causes, so we must not lump them under one head, but deal with them in the light of specific circumstances.

While pointing out such mistakes, we must also point out one of another kind: for instance, denial of the fact that Pavlov's or Michurin's theories are important. The jumping-off point of those who make this mistake is, again, not always the same. Some of them are politically opposed to the Soviet Union, and for that reason inclined to deny even the scientific achievements of the Soviet Union. Others, because they do not belong to the same school of thought, simply won't yield an inch. In the case of the former it is a question of political viewpoint. With the latter it is a question of academic thinking. So these mistakes too must be dealt with in the light of specific circumstances and not lumped together.

(2) With regard to works of art and literature, the Party has only one point to make, that is, that they should "serve the workers, peasants and soldiers," or, in terms of today, serve the working people as a

whole, intellectuals included. Socialist realism, in our view, is the most fruitful creative method, but it is not the only method. Provided he sets out to meet the needs of the workers, peasants and soldiers, the writer can choose whatever method he thinks will best enable him to write well, and he can vie with others. As to subject-matter, the Party has never set limits to this. It is not right to lay down such dicta as: write only about workers, peasants and soldiers; write only about the new society; or write only about new types of people. If literature and art are to serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, it stands to reason that we must praise the new society and positive people. But at the same time we must also criticize the old society and negative elements; we must praise what is progressive and criticize what is backward. So the choice of subject-matter in literature is extremely wide. Creative writing deals not only with things that really exist, or that once existed, but also with things that never existed — the gods in the heavens, animals and birds who talk, and so on. One can write about positive people and the new society, and also about negative elements and the old. Furthermore, it is difficult to show the new society to advantage if we fail to describe the old, hard to show the positive to advantage if we leave out what is negative. Taboos and commandments about choice of subject-matter can only hamstring art and literature, and result in writing to formula and bad taste. They can only do harm. As for questions relating to the specific characteristics of art and literature, the creation of the typical, and so on, they must be the

subject of free discussion among writers and artists, letting them freely hammer out differences of opinion till they gradually reach agreement.

In the theatre we have already had experience of applying the principle, "let flowers of many kinds blossom side by side, weed through the old to let the new emerge." That has been most valuable. What we must do now is to apply the same principle to all other branches of art and literature.

(3) In the field of philosophy and social sciences our achievements have been great. But for that very reason, there is a great danger of sectarianism. If we do not pay prompt attention to this, there is a serious danger of mental stagnation. Since the founding of the People's Republic, the teaching of Marxism-Leninism has spread among the intellectuals. There have been campaigns to remould our thinking, struggles against bourgeois idealism and a drive to weed out hidden counter-revolutionaries. All this activity is right and necessary, and has borne good fruit. We must, however, consider the seamy side of things as well. Some Party members have a tendency to monopolize academic studies in philosophy and the social sciences. They claim to be always right, fail to see the merits of others, or even forget that others have any merits. They fail to see the progress made by others. They take offence at the critical opinions of others. They always see themselves as the erudite teachers and others as their puny pupils—mere idealists or bourgeois scholars—now and for ever after. This is extremely dangerous. If things go on like this, they themselves are likely to degenerate, and philoso-

phy and social sciences in our country will cease to progress and lose their vitality. These comrades had better stop this self-glorification right away; they had better be modest, listen more often to others' criticism, work harder at their studies, make a point of learning what they can from people outside the Party, and really co-operate with them so as to avoid setbacks to our work in philosophy and the social sciences.

Our People's Republic is nearly seven years old now. Although there are still some people who cling to idealist ways of thinking and bourgeois ideas, many have made great progress. In research and educational work in philosophy and social sciences, we must consider re-deploying our forces, bit by bit, as the situation demands, revising methods and measures which were wrong from the start, or which were right at one time but are now out of date. This is something we must do so that we can mobilize all the positive elements for promoting our work in these spheres. Both philosophy and the social sciences are important branches of knowledge, so we must do good work in these fields.

Here, in passing, I should like to mention the question of modern history. Modern history is an extremely important branch of social science, but we have not achieved much in the past few years in this field. I hear that people are expecting the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party to compile a textbook on the history of the Party, after which they propose to write books on modern history based on it. Please don't wait any more. The Central Committee is not going to compile any such textbook. All

it is going to do is to publish a chronicle of events of the Party and collections of documents. Our scholars who specialize in modern history should, therefore, get down to independent study of the various problems of modern history. And in research in modern history, too, the policy of letting diverse schools of thought contend must apply; no other will do.

Finish with sectarianism and unite with all who are ready to co-operate, all who possibly can co-operate with us. Put aside the desire to monopolize things. Get rid of unreasonable rules and commandments, and apply the policy of letting flowers of many kinds blossom, letting diverse schools of thought contend. Do not think only of the interests of your own department; try to give more help to others and to other departments. Don't be self-conceited and cocksure. Be modest and discreet and respect others. That is how to rid ourselves of the shortcomings which have marred our work in building up unity; that is how to strengthen our unity to the utmost.

We hope, too, that writers, artists and scientists who are not Party members will also pay attention to the question of securing closer unity. And here I would like to repeat part of what Comrade Chou En-lai said in his "Report on the Question of Intellectuals."

"We have already pointed out that there is still a certain distance between some intellectuals and our Party. We must take the initiative to remove this. For this distance, both sides usually bear responsibility. On the one hand, our comrades do not approach or try to understand the intellectuals; on the other, certain intellectuals still have reservations regarding socialism

or even oppose it. There are such intellectuals in our enterprises, schools, government offices and society as a whole. Failing to differentiate between friend and foe, between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang, between the Chinese people and imperialism, they are dissatisfied with the policies and measures of the Party and the People's Government and hanker after capitalism or even feudalism. They are hostile to the Soviet Union and unwilling to learn from her. They refuse to study Marxism-Leninism, and sneer at it. Despising labour, the labouring people and government workers who come from families of working people, they refuse to mix with workers and peasants or government cadres of worker or peasant origin. Unwilling to see the growth of new forces, they consider progressives as opportunists, and often stir up trouble and hostility between intellectuals and the Party as well as among intellectuals themselves. They have enormous conceit, thinking themselves Number One in the world, and refusing to accept anyone's leadership or criticism. Denying the interests of the people or of society as a whole, they view everything only from their personal interests. What is to their personal advantage they accept, what is not to their personal advantage they oppose. Of course, there are very few intellectuals today who have all these faults; but not a small number have one fault or another. Even some of the middle group often hold some of the wrong views mentioned above, let alone the backward intellectuals. And not a few progressives are still guilty of such faults as narrow-mindedness, arrogance, and the tendency to view everything from

their personal interests. Unless such intellectuals change their stand, however hard we may try to approach them, there will still be a distance between us and them."

That is to say, we must call on Party members and, equally, on people outside the Party to make a great effort, to strengthen our unity.

Individualism and parochial prejudice can also be found in artistic, literary and scientific circles. There is also a lack of mutual understanding between scientific workers of long standing and the newcomers. These things are bad. We ought to—and I am sure we can—get rid of them. If only Party members try to set a good example and work hard with people outside the Party, there should be no difficulty in solving this problem.

III. Criticism and Study

In regard to criticism, our policy of letting flowers of many kinds blossom, diverse schools of thought contend means freedom to criticize and freedom to counter-criticize.

Some of the criticism we have today is of the thunder-bolt variety; some of it is milk and water. How do we tackle this question?

There are two kinds of criticism. One is criticism directed against the enemy—what people call criticism that "kills at a blow," criticism with no holds barred. The other is criticism directed against the honestly mistaken—well-meant, comradely criticism, made in the cause of unity, intended to achieve unity through

struggle. In making this kind of criticism, one must always bear the whole situation in mind. The critic should rely on reasoning, and his aim should be to help others. One should never adopt an attitude of "the Revolution is none of your business!" like the "Imitation Foreign Devil" in Lu Hsun's *The True Story of Ah Q*.[5]

But, in either case, criticism must be the outcome of careful study. One must not dash into print with a criticism the moment one spots something. It should be written only after thorough study and after a good deal of thinking.

The idea that criticism necessarily implies invective is wrong. When we were in Yenan, there was a counter-revolutionary called Wang Shih-wei. Later we had that other counter-revolutionary, Hu Feng. Both of them, in their "essays" or in other ways, attacked the Party and the people's regime. It stands to reason that we should give such counter-revolutionaries blow for blow. But it would be wrong to use the same method among ourselves—the people.

Concerning criticism directed against the honestly mistaken, I should like to recommend four articles: 1. "Reform Our Study" (Mao Tse-tung), 2. "Rectify the Party's Style of Work" (Mao Tse-tung), 3. "Oppose Party Jargon" (Mao Tse-tung), and 4. "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (the *People's Daily*). The first three articles are criticisms of two comrades, Wang Ming and Po Ku,[6] who had made serious mistakes; the fourth is a criticism of Comrade Stalin, a comrade known for his outstanding services, who also made very serious mis-

takes—a comrade whose achievements outweighed his mistakes. When one reads these articles, one realizes that there can be criticism couched neither in excessive nor lukewarm terms—criticism which is a help to many. It can be seen with what great care the authors of these articles studied things before they wrote. And this is precisely the type of criticism we must encourage.

It is a very difficult job to reach the heights in science or art. It is difficult because only those who get to grips with reality make the grade, because there is no room for the smart aleck. We should give every support to our scientists, writers and artists. In our social system, scientists and artists who do honest work merit support, not blows. When one is engaged in independent thinking, in complicated and creative labour, it is impossible never to make mistakes. In the first place, people make wrong judgements simply because of gaps in their knowledge. In the second place, one can go wrong by exaggerating what is correct and treating it as absolute truth. Lenin said: "...it is enough to take one little step further — a step that might seem to be in the same direction — and truth becomes error." (*"Left-wing" Communism, An Infantile Disorder,* Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. II, p. 433. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1952.) There are people who are genuine advocates of all that is progressive, but who still make mistakes simply because they are a bit over-hasty, and often make mistakes of this kind. And thirdly, some people make mistakes because of their idealist outlook, and there is nothing strange about that, because "human cogni-

tion is not (...does not go in) a straight line, but a curve, endlessly approaching a series of circles, spirals. Any segment, fragment or part of this curve can be turned (turned in a one-sided way) into a self-contained, finite straight line which (if you don't see the wood for the trees) will then lead you into a morass, into quasi-religious obscurantism (where it fortifies the class interest of the ruling classes)!" (Lenin: *Philosophical Notebooks*, p. 330. State Political Publishing House, Leningrad, 1947.) In the process of human cognition, mental sluggishness, the error of seeing things as if they had no connection with anything else (what we call "going into the ox horn") and viewing things one-sidedly are all things that lead to idealistic mistakes.

It is quite common for people to make mistakes in all innocence. There is no such person as a man who never makes mistakes. We must make a sharp distinction between mistakes like this and statements consciously directed against the revolution. Criticism of such mistakes must only be made for the good of others; it must be cool-headed criticism, well reasoned. In making it, we must bear the whole situation in mind and act in a spirit of unity, with the intention of achieving unity. We must do all we can to help those who have made mistakes correct them, and those criticized should have no apprehensions about being criticized.

It is easy to make mistakes. But mistakes should be rectified immediately, the sooner the better. It is sticking to one's mistakes that does the harm. As far as being criticized is concerned, one should stick to what is right, and dissent if others are wrong in their

criticism. But if the other party is right you must rectify your mistakes and humbly accept others' criticism. To admit a mistake frankly, to root out the causes of it, to analyse the situation in which it was made and thoroughly discuss how to correct it is, as far as a political party is concerned, the hallmark of a mature party. As far as the individual is concerned, it is the hallmark of a realist. To accept criticism when one has made a mistake is to accept the help of others. Besides helping the person concerned, that also helps the progress of science, art and literature in our country; and there is certainly nothing wrong with that!

As regards study in general, we must continue to see to it that the study of Marxism-Leninism is organized on a voluntary basis. At the same time, we must acquire a broad range of general knowledge; we must critically study things both past and present, things at home and from abroad, and critically learn from both friends and foes.

Marxism-Leninism is being enthusiastically studied by most of our intellectuals. That is a good thing. The scientific theories of Marx and Lenin are the cream of human knowledge, truth that is everywhere applicable. Once there were people who thought that Marxism-Leninism was not applicable in China; but such ideas have been proved sheer nonsense. Without scientific Marxist-Leninist theory to guide us, it is unthinkable that the revolution could have been victorious in China. It is also unthinkable that we could have achieved the tremendous successes and made the rapid progress that we have in construction and in scientific and cultural work.

There are still, however, many shortcomings and mistakes in our study of Marxism-Leninism, and the main defect is a tendency to doctrinairism.

Fifteen years ago, in May 1941, Comrade Mao Tse-tung wrote his article "Reform Our Study." Later, in February 1942, he wrote "Rectify the Party's Style of Work" and "Oppose Party Jargon." These three articles were the main documents used in the campaign in Yenan to improve Party work. That was an ideological campaign directed against subjectivism, and mainly against doctrinairism. It was the greatest Marxist-Leninist movement in the intellectual life of our country since the May the Fourth Movement of 1919. During the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in our country, the Chinese revolution nearly foundered on doctrinairism. It was, and is, a bitter enemy of Marxism-Leninism. We must not forget that painful experience. We must also be fully alive to the fact that if academic studies are conducted in a doctrinaire way, and if artistic and literary work and scientific research are led by people who take up a doctrinaire attitude, things are bound to go wrong. That is because such an attitude runs directly counter to the Marxist-Leninist attitude of looking at things as they are.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity, in speaking to you writers, artists and scientists, of seriously recommending to you those three articles of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's — "Reform Our Study," "Rectify the Party's Style of Work" and "Oppose Party Jargon" — and the "Resolution on Some Questions in the History of Our Party" adopted by

the sixth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party at its seventh plenary session, on April 20, 1945. I hope that every worker in these fields will read and re-read these documents till he really knows the difference between doctrinairism and Marxism-Leninism, till he discovers why the former is the bitter enemy of the latter and why it is necessary to wage a resolute struggle against doctrinairism.

We must have a broad range of general knowledge.

In medical science, agronomy, philosophy, history, literature, drama, painting and music, etc., China has a rich heritage. This heritage must be studied seriously and accepted critically. The point is not that we have done so much in these fields, but that we have done too little, and have not been serious enough in our approach. There is still this attitude of belittling our national heritage, and in some spheres it is still a really serious problem.

What kind of heritage are we to accept and how?

If we were to accept only what is perfect by present-day standards, there would be nothing left for us to take over. On the other hand, if we were to accept our cultural heritage uncritically, we should simply be taking the attitude summed up in the phrase "everything Chinese is best."

We suggest that in dealing with our cultural heritage the principle should be: Carefully select, cherish and foster all that is good in it while criticizing its faults and shortcomings in a serious way. At present our work suffers because we do neither well. There is a tendency to reject offhand even what is good in our cultural heritage. At pres-

ent that is the main trend. The recent performance of the Kunshan opera *Fifteen Strings of Cash* shows how wrong it was to say there was nothing good in Kunshan opera. And if there is such a tendency in the theatre, what about other branches of art, literature and scientific research? We must admit that there are similar tendencies in them too, and we must do something about it. At the same time, we can also see a tendency not to criticize, or even to gloss over shortcomings in and blots on our cultural heritage. This attitude is neither honest nor sincere, and that we must alter, too.

Workers in art, literature and science need to learn from the people. The wisdom of the people is inexhaustible. There are still many treasures among the people that have not yet been discovered or, though discovered, not made good use of. Take medical science for instance. In the past, needling and cautery and special curative breathing exercises were scorned; only now are they being taken notice of. But other "popular" healing methods such as osteopathy, massage and herbal medicines have even now not received the attention due to them.

Then take music and painting. Not enough attention has been paid to our national heritage in these two spheres of creative activity. Wherever there are such tendencies they must be corrected.

As they come from the people things are often not systematically developed or are crude or lack theoretical explanation. Some of them have more than a bit of the "quack" about them, or a taint of the superstitious. There is nothing surprising about

that. It is the duty of our scientists, artists and writers not to despise these things but to make a careful study of them, to select, cherish and foster the good in them, and, where necessary, put them on a scientific basis.

We must have our national pride, but we must not become national nihilists. We oppose that misguided attitude known as "wholesale Westernization." But that does not mean that we can afford to be arrogant and refuse to learn good things from abroad. Our country is still a very backward one; we can make it prosperous and strong only by doing our best to learn all we can from foreign countries. Under no circumstances is national arrogance justified.

We must learn from the Soviet Union, from the People's Democracies, and from the peoples of all lands.

To learn from the Soviet Union — that is a correct watchword. We have already learnt a little, but much remains to be learnt. The Soviet Union is the world's first socialist state, the leader of the world camp of peace and democracy. It has the highest rate of industrial development. It has a rich experience in socialist construction. In not a few important branches of science it has caught up with and surpassed the most advanced capitalist countries. It stands to reason that it is worth our while to learn from such a country and such a people. It is utterly wrong not to learn from the Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, in learning from the Soviet Union we must not mechanically copy everything in the Soviet Union in a doctrinaire way. We must make

what we have learnt fit our actual conditions. That is a point we must pay attention to. Otherwise, we shall run into trouble.

Besides learning from the Soviet Union, we must also learn from the People's Democracies. Every People's Democracy has its own special merits. Some of them have advanced further than China in industry and scientific technique, others are more advanced in other fields. To learn from them all is well worth while. Arrogance in this connection is entirely out of place.

People in countries other than the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies have different social institutions and political systems. Social institutions and political systems may come and go, but the people will live on and continue to progress. It is not without good reason that this is so. We must therefore critically study all their good points — in art and literature, in science, in their customs and habits, in every sphere. Here too a feeling of superiority is quite out of place.

Apart from learning from our friends, we must see what we can learn from our enemies — not to learn what is reactionary in their systems but to study what is good in their methods of management or in their scientific techniques. Our aim in this is to speed the progress of our socialist construction, so as to build up our strength to ward off aggression and safeguard peace in Asia and throughout the world.

I also want to say something about Party members learning from people outside the Party.

The knowledge possessed by not a few of our Party members is less than it should be. Non-Party people usually lack a fundamental knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, but for many of our non-Party friends who are keen on studying Marxism-Leninism, this is really a thing of the past, or soon will be. Anyhow, plenty of them have bridged, or are bridging this gap, so this question will soon solve itself. The point I want to make is that it is time for Party members to take note of their own inadequacies and remedy them. There is only one way to do so: to seek advice and learn honestly and modestly from those who know. The great majority of those intellectuals who are not Communist Party members study very hard. Members of the Communist Party must not be behind-hand in learning from them. This is an important point as regards our studies.

Now that this policy — "let flowers of many kinds blossom, diverse schools of thought contend" — has been put forward, many problems will crop up one after the other and demand solutions. I hope all of you will do some hard thinking on such questions. Today I have only touched upon some matters of principle, and anything I say is open to correction.

(Revised by the author. June 6, 1956.)

Postscript: Since I delivered this speech I have received seventy-two letters, including one from Mr. Kuo Mo-jo, some of them written in an individual

capacity, others on behalf of groups. Some express opinions on my speech, others say what the writers themselves think of the policy. They have all been a great help to me, and I take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks.

APPENDIX

A. Several scientists have sent in letters expressing the view that we must guard against people getting off the rails in interpreting the policy of letting diverse schools of thought contend. Here is an extract from a letter from Mr. Yang Chao-lien of the Science Publishing House.

"There is not the slightest doubt," he says, "that to let diverse schools of thought contend is a thoroughly sound principle. In practice, though, in interpreting it there is the likelihood of aberrations and we should be on our guard against this.

"As the phrase suggests, contestants should be, more or less, recognized exponents of one or another 'school of thought.' But there are people who happily dabble in knowledge. Such people stumble on something, think they know everything, refuse to carry their investigations further, refuse to embark on a solid course of academic study, fall into a morass and don't know how to get out of it. In fact, they cling to their mistakes and refuse to recognize the truth. Let me give a striking example. Practically everyone accepts that the trisection of an angle simply by the use of compass and ruler, and that the construction of a perpetual motion machine have been proved impossible. But there are always some people who choose to waste their time and cudgel their brains in the hope of working a miracle. There are probably quite a few who waste their energy and intelligence in such meaningless and palpably futile attempts. The probability is that among them are some who would welcome the chance of founding a 'school of thought' overnight and creating a sensation by taking part in contention, without all the drudgery of prolonged study. And my experience is that if you suggest they get down to a serious study of things about which well-founded conclusions have been reached, you get some flippant retort like, 'That's a theory concocted by a bunch of bourgeois scholars. It's idealistic!'

"Take another case, somewhat similar. We know from experience that there are people, engineers and technologists, in particular, who by the nature of their work have little chance

of coming across documents and other material having a bearing on their work. They take enormous pains working things out from scratch without consulting references or seeking advice. Finally they manage to solve their problem correctly. But, alas, they still don't realize that someone else has long since worked out what they have been at such pains to discover—sometimes several decades earlier!

"It takes years of hard work and practice before one can really become a scholar and an exponent of a school of thought and contend eloquently. This is a minimum requirement in understanding the principle and I think this point needs to be made emphatically. Unless we bear it in mind, the various research and higher educational bodies will find themselves having to acknowledge the discoveries and inventions of hosts of 'scholars' or 'founders of schools of thought' who choose to 'contend' with one another. They will have to spend a great deal of precious time going into those things, patiently and carefully explaining why things are impossible, or pointing out that others have discovered them already. All that would, of course, be a sheer waste of energy for all concerned. If, however, one has a correct understanding of the meaning of 'letting diverse schools of thought contend,' this waste of effort can be reduced and useless effort turned into useful channels."

The opinions of Mr. Yang and several other scientists on how to avoid distortion of the policy of "letting diverse schools of thought contend" are based on their personal experience and are well-reasoned. Such distortion and misinterpretation must be avoided.

B. Some people are of the opinion that there should be no freedom to propagate idealism in China. Others think that since there is freedom to propagate idealism, idealists must have unlimited freedom to do so. Both views are mistaken. Take religion, for example. In our country the various religious bodies have their churches, temples or mosques, their own publications, their own publishing houses and their own schools for training preachers. They are free to have these things, which are protected by the state. However, for the sake of unity between believers (theists) and non-believers (atheists) and to avoid clashes between them, non-believers do not conduct anti-religious propaganda in churches, temples or mosques, and believers do not preach their religious doctrines in public assemblies outside the churches, temples or mosques. So there is a limit to the freedom of both non-believers and believers to spread their views.

TRANSLATORS' NOTES

1. Flies, mosquitoes, rats and sparrows are considered "four evils" in China as carriers of diseases or pests which destroy crops and food.

2. In 1917, Hu Shih (b. 1891) joined the movement for a new culture as an advocate of substituting the vernacular for the classical literary language. Later, when the cultural movement associated with the May the Fourth Movement of 1919 advanced and the ideas of Marxism-Leninism spread among the people, he withdrew to the side of the imperialists and comprador-bourgeoisie as an opponent of socialism and revolutionary action. He was a rabid advocate of pragmatism in its most reactionary, subjective idealist form. This led him to support the Kuomintang's demagogic theories of piecemeal reform—and the whole philosophy of bourgeois individualism.

Politically, he supported the rule of the warlords and opposed the revolutionaries led by Sun Yat-sen. Then after Chiang Kai-shek betrayed the revolution in 1927, he came out as a supporter of Chiang's dictatorial rule at home and capitulation to the imperialists. From then on, he was, and remains today, an enemy of the Communist Party and the people's revolution and a faithful hanger-on of the American imperialists and Chiang Kai-shek. For this reason he is repudiated by the whole nation.

Hu Shih held several important posts in old China's universities and academic institutions, and was thus able to spread his reactionary ideas there. Some of his pernicious influence has persisted in such circles, and that is why since liberation, in the course of the general criticism of obscurantism, his ideas have come under heavy fire.

3. At the time of the May the Fourth Movement of 1919, Liang Sou-ming opposed the campaign for a new culture. He advocated preservation of the old feudal culture with some slight reforms. Later he promoted a "rural construction movement" the aim of which was, as Liang himself said, to resist the peasant movement led by the Communist Party. He denied

that there were any exploiting classes in China and advocated co-operation between peasants and landlords, the formation of armed forces by the landlords themselves to protect the old order, and the setting-up of schools for peasant-farmers to indoctrinate them with feudal ideas. Playing into the hands of the imperialists, he opposed industrialization and wanted China to remain an agricultural country. After liberation he gave his support to the People's Government, and became a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Liang's ideas have naturally come in for much criticism.

4. Yu Ping-po is a veteran writer who became well known during the time of the May the Fourth Movement. He has specialized in Chinese classical literature, and for many years made an intensive study of the famous classical novel *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. He was deeply influenced by Hu Shih's mistaken views on the study of the classics. After the Japanese surrender, Yu joined the Chiu San Society, one of China's many democratic parties. He supported the students' patriotic movement and opposed the corrupt rule of the Kuomintang. He is now a research fellow of the Institute of Literary Studies of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and a deputy to the National People's Congress.

5. Ah Q is the hero of the famous novel *The True Story of Ah Q* by Lu Hsun (1881-1936). Ah Q is a poor odd-job man in a village and lives from hand to mouth. During the Revolution of 1911, he is fired with a desire to join the Revolution and goes for advice to the son of Chien, the local squire, a pseudo-revolutionary, called "Imitation Foreign Devil" by Ah Q because he dresses like a foreigner and apes foreign ways, who tells him that the Revolution is none of his business.

6. Comrades Wang Ming (Chen Shao-yu) and Po Ku (Chin Pang-hsien) fell into doctrinaire ways and made serious "leftist" mistakes as Communist Party leaders in the years 1931-1935. The interested reader will find the main facts of these events in the "Resolution on Some Questions in the History of Our Party," in Vol. IV of the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1956. Comrade Po Ku was killed in a plane accident on his way from Chungking to Yenan in February 1946.